


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by

George R. Shepherd

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A MEMBERSHIP DRIVE—NOW!

By MORGAN PHILLIPS (Secretary, the Labour Party)

WE have won a mighty victory. That victory opens up what will be a great and entirely new chapter in the history of the Labour Party. I believe that our actions and behaviour during the period of decision in which we now find ourselves may well determine our whole political future.

The Labour Party, by the work of its members in and out of Parliament, during the days ahead can so gain the esteem and good will of the British electorate as to become largely unassailable as the first choice of a progressive, freedom-loving democracy. That must be our aim.

The success of the new Government's legislation will be vital in settling the Party's future. But no less important will be the Party's work outside Parliament. Throughout the country the Party must be alive, vigorous, imaginative. It would be fatal merely to sit back and watch the Government at work. We must carry the questing, all-conquering, comradesly spirit of the election campaign into the days ahead.

For this we will need informed, expanding local parties. A great membership campaign must be launched throughout the country. The election results show what a vast field of potential new members awaits us. Let us now go out on a nation-wide crusade to bring these Labour voters into the fold.

Do not let us forget that it is inevitable there should be fluctuations in public opinion during the difficult days ahead. A predominantly Tory Press may well seek to magnify and distort such fluctuations. We shall, therefore, have the greatest possible need of an informed, active and expanded membership, able and willing to undertake the vital task of explaining Socialist policies and principles and relating them to the legislation which will come before Parliament.

Labour has proved itself in opposition. It must now justify itself in office. We who are outside Parliament can render great service to those inside by our vigorous and whole-hearted support. Let us to the task now.

INDEPENDENCE—

THE KEY TO VICTORY

By **GEORGE R. SHEPHERD** (National Agent, the Labour Party)

I am a very happy man indeed. I came into the Labour Party at its birth, and I have been permitted within my own political life to take an active part in creating one of the greatest events in British political history.

The working classes, hitherto a subject race, have succeeded in the organisation of political power and they have thereby become the ruling class in their own land.

Although conscious of my own shortcomings and whilst not unmindful of the overwhelming part played by millions of members either living or now dead, I do take pride in my own contribution to final success. I am indeed very, very happy.

Reward of Independence

Labour's rise to power is largely due to independence in the political field. To some people the line of independence has seemed too narrow, and there have been tendencies to look for support to Liberals supposedly on our right and to the splinter parties, supposedly on our left.

It is even claimed that a Government of the Left could have been achieved years ago had the Labour Party been prepared to forsake the path. Conceivably a so-called Left Government might have provided great personal prizes to the opportunists amongst us but for my part, having believed in independence from the beginning, I have had my lessons of what dependence on other political organisations means in the Minority Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929.

This election has brought its full reward for the Party's adherence to steadfast independence. There is now a large majority and there are no commitments whatever to any other political organisation.

The Labour Government, so far as governments can, will have a perfectly free hand in leading the nation until the next appeal to the electorate.

Four Great Moments

Historically there have been four great moments in the life of the Party. They are its creation in 1900, the return of 29 Independent Labour Members in 1906, Labour's call to the nation to challenge Fascism in 1939, and the General Election just concluded. Which of these events is the most important or whether the events named are the most important is, of course, a matter of opinion, but I think if I were asked to make a choice I would select the creation of the Labour Party and the challenge to Fascism as likely to occupy the attention of historians more than any other event. *In my view, the action of the Party, led in Mr. Attlee's absence by Mr. Greenwood, was one of the most decisive political steps ever taken, either nationally or internationally.* The General Election just closed is the reward to and an expression of confidence in the Labour Party and its maturity. The Party has reached manhood with all its responsibilities.

Strongest Parliamentary Party

The new Parliamentary Party is likely to prove in number and personnel the strongest ever. Without making invidious distinctions it would be impossible to indicate by names the political strength of its membership.

Amongst the younger men there are many who, if they retain their seats at Westminster, will find their way to the Front Bench in the years to come. Ernest Bevin was quite right when at Blackpool he expressed his pleasure at the evidence before him that the Labour Party had within its membership the elements of renewal and of permanency.

On a bigger scale, the position is similar to that of 1926, for in that Parliamentary Party of 29, Henderson, Snowden, Jowett, Barnes, Hodge, Walsh, MacDonald and Clynes were to reach Cabinet rank or the Premiership, whilst Crooks and Shackleton were to

achieve national fame. Behind them all, however, was the great pioneer, James Keir Hardie, to whom the independent political labour organisation owes almost everything for its inception.

Unless I am mistaken the new Parliamentary Party, most of whose membership will be outside of ministerial ranks, will produce their own giants for the future.

A Truly National Party

Labour's 392 members are a varied lot. One hundred and nineteen of them were sponsored by the Trade Unions, 24 by the Co-operative Party, and, mark this, 249 were nominated and elected on the responsibility of the Constituency Labour Parties. The federal nature of the Labour Party, whilst remaining intact in the Annual Party Conference, has quite clearly become enveloped in a corporate organisation where all sections of the movement join in their Constituency Parties as one national movement. The national character of the Party has now been endorsed by the electorate. The old terms of "industrial" and "backward areas" have, in the Party sense, become meaningless.

There are no backward areas any longer. All regions take their place in one great national field, as the figures below are ample proof:—

Regional Area	Labour Members of Parliament.
Northern	31
Yorkshire E. & W. Ridings	40
Lancashire & Cheshire ...	56
East Midlands	30
West Midlands	34
Eastern	39
London	48
Home & Southern	37
South-Western	15
Scotland	37
Wales	25

South-West Developments

It will be noted that, in point of representation, the South-Western County area is the weakest of the Regions. A glance at the polling returns, however, will indicate the great developments in Labour opinion in those counties. At the next election the South-Western Counties may, with more intensive propaganda, find themselves amongst the Labour strongholds.

It is too early to give full statistical information about the election, but in other issues it may be possible to draw attention by figures to some of the more significant features of the contest. They will all bear fruit if we give enough thought to them. Already some of these features are apparent, and here is a striking one.

In the Speaker's Conference last year accommodation was reached under which, because of the temporary depopulation of London, no immediate re-distribution should take place, but that, as a gesture, 20 of the largest constituencies outside the County of London should be re-divided to the extent of the creation of not more than 25 additional seats. In the 20 old seats Labour held three and the Conservatives 17, and it was generally expected that the Tories had come very well out of the agreement. *The 20 seats were actually divided by the Commission into 45 new constituencies, and of these the Labour Party has won 29 and the Tories 16. This result is all the more welcome because the Labour victories have been obtained in areas not previously favourable to Labour propaganda.*

Labour's Rise to Power

Below will be found particulars of the General Elections of 1929 to 1945. The figures describe Labour's increase in its total poll and give the average vote per constituency in each contest. In the last column will be found the average decrease or increase per constituency in those elections, and, notwithstanding the debacle of 1931, they describe overall Labour's inevitable rise to power:—

	Contests	Poll	Average Poll	Comparison with 1929
1929 ..	569	8,364,883	14,694	
1931 ..	508	6,648,171	13,086	— 1,608
1935 ..	539	8,325,260	15,445	+ 751
1945 ..	601	11,962,678	19,905	+ 5,211

The Liberal Party has gone. The Splinter Parties have gone.

No One-Party System

But I am not one of those who believe, like some people, that it would be a good thing to wipe the Tories out, even if it were possible. As a democrat, I do not believe in the single party, legal or otherwise, even though that may be determined by the nation itself. Democratic institutions, if they

are to flourish, must have within them representative and divergent opinions, for it is out of the clash of ideas and prevailing criticism that a democratic government functions efficiently.

I agree, however, that there is no room for a Tory Party like the present one, and in this many Tories are of the same mind. Even a Conservative Party, in a democracy, must move with the times, or it becomes a real danger to the State.

Tory Strength

The Tory Party has suffered badly in its representation in the House of Commons, but it would be wrong for all of us to overlook its strength in the

country. Even in its great defeat it polled over 9,000,000 votes.

The Labour Party, both at Westminster and in the country, will need all its watchfulness and determination to prevent that comparatively small changeover of votes required to place the Tory Party into seats of power once more. The next few years, therefore, will be full of responsibility and greater activity will be necessary to shoulder the obligations placed on us.

The Party can be assured that its present leadership and its National Executive Committee will do their utmost to encourage organisation and propaganda in preparation for the next great effort.

REPORT ON THE CAMPAIGNS

We are devoting the main part of this issue to reports on the General Election campaign throughout the regions. All the reports were written before the election results were known. As will be seen, each report breathes the spirit of coming victory and, taking them all in all we think they are a

great tribute to the political prescience and "savvy" of our Organisers.

Nevertheless, valuable criticisms and suggestions are made and we hope these will be studied carefully by all concerned. We shall be glad to publish any comments on the Reports in our next issue.

FARM MEN LOOK TO LABOUR

By WILFRED YOUNG (Eastern Counties Organiser)

I could write of huge and excited crowds and of small and pensive ones; of candidates and agents of all kinds; of orderly and disorderly committee rooms, and none at all; of the experiences of rich and poor Parties; and of disappointments suffered and of hopes fulfilled. But I had better stick to two cardinal problems—propaganda and organisation. For it is the future which matters, not the past.

My experiences of this General Election have reinforced my conviction, that if the rural constituencies are to be won and held, then they need to be treated differently than before. Tardy and inadequate recognition must give way to quick and full response to their needs in the new political era which has just begun.

Henceforward they will need help increasingly from speakers who can convince the labourer and the farmer that the Labour Party has a policy for agriculture, who can explain in clear and earnest terms what that policy is, how it can be applied, and what benefits will flow from its application.

SUITABLE CANDIDATES

As to the kind of candidate required, my view is that no person should be selected for a rural constituency, unless he or she understands the agricultural industry fully; possesses a thorough knowledge of Labour's agricultural policy; and has the capacity to expound Labour's case simply and persuasively.

In every agricultural constituency the Labour Party should put forward the most suitable person. For only thus shall we gain and hold the labourer's confidence, and without this Labour cannot win power.

As to organisation, in predominantly rural areas, no less than in others, we must add considerably to our effective personnel. Hundreds of branches of the Agricultural Workers' Union performed wonders in this Election; in numerous parishes they were the only units of organisation at work; but a trade union committee is not an adequate instrument for effective electioneering.

ELECTION COMMITTEE

We must, therefore, try to establish an effectual election committee in every sizeable rural parish. Such a committee, composed of men and women of any calling, who have embraced the programme of the Labour Party, and who want to prove their faith by their deeds, must be ready to go into action the very moment an election begins; and what a difference this would make.

This means that we must get ready now for the next General Election,

which may not be long delayed. It means, too, that we have to bring into our ranks more and more capable and zealous people, and we can only do this by engaging in a well-ordered and sustained propaganda campaign in every rural constituency. And when we have found converts we must give them useful work to do. Particularly does this apply to the young.

MORE AGENTS NEEDED

In many constituencies the work was carried through by men and women who had no previous election experience. They were unpractised, but tremendously plucky and full of faith. On the whole they did exceedingly well. All honour to them!! Let us hope that they will not have to fight again in the same unequal and adverse circumstances. Obviously we need more full-time Party Agents, and an expanding organisation; these matters call for attention as never before.

The countryside is awake. The election results will prove this. Let us take the opportunity which its awareness provides to build better and firmer organisation than before.

YOUNG, KEEN WORKERS

By W. B. LEWCOCK (Northern Area Organiser)

NORTHERN AREA

The recent General Election campaign in the Northern Area was most encouraging—a tonic after some rather difficult years.

CANDIDATES

Of Labour's 25 standard-bearers 24 were contesting for the first time. Eleven of these were under 40, while the average candidate's age in the area was 46. The standard in the new team was really excellent although there were exceptions due on occasion to over-enthusiasm on isolated items of policy. Their approach to the electorate was very sound and their handling of questions highly commendable. In the main they adhered strictly to Party policy.

AGENTS

Of the 35 agents in the area (Sunderland is D.M.C.) 25 were acting as elec-

tion agents for the first time. Generally the job was well done. The incoming of bands of young keen workers encouraged every agent and a little weakness here and there was covered by the more experienced campaigners. One of our agents acting for the first time fulfilled an important engagement by taking off one hour to be married. Unfortunately, another agent—Stan. Nicholson—was taken ill, but the work was splendidly maintained by the candidate, Mr. O. G. Willey and Mrs. Nicholson.

A special feature to be noted and to receive attention is the need to get canvassing in its right and proper place in the campaign. This was perhaps of the whole job the least well done.

The results in the Northern Area will be good. In the last Parliament 16 seats out of 38 were held for Labour. In the next Parliament how many ???

BUMPER HARVEST

By **REG. C. WALLIS** (Secretary Lancashire and Cheshire Regional Council)

Whatever the harvest may be in the north-west the workers have, by their enthusiasm, solidarity and earnestness warranted a bumper crop. Every seat was contested, 84 candidatures being promoted for the 79 Divisions (5-double membered) and amongst the candidatures were persons representative of virtually every field of public life. Twenty candidates were serving men in this war, and there were four women candidates, Mrs. B. A. Castle (Betts) (Blackburn), Councillor Mrs. E. M. Braddock (Liverpool Exchange), Dr. Mabel Tylecote (Middleton and Prestwich), and Miss Agnes Bulley (Wirral).

In the 79 constituencies 22 full-time agents were operating, several of them having been appointed in the last two months. In the remaining 57 constituencies we were dependent on persons who were normally otherwise employed, and to those persons we are deeply indebted for their ready response and also for the high level of service given. Well over half the agents had not previously been responsible for conducting a General Election campaign, and to these the Election Preparation Schools earlier organised by the Regional Council were invaluable. Despite the inexperience it would appear that, generally speaking, our election campaigns were run with reasonable efficiency.

BIG POSTER CAMPAIGN

To assist agents the Regional Office

produced an "Election Special," in which space was left for the use of the local candidates. Over half the constituencies in the area availed themselves of this service and a total print of 550,000 was taken in quantities varying from 6,000 to 30,000 per constituency. Over 5,000 copies of a three-colour quad-crown poster were also issued and together with the United Textile Factory Workers' Association 4,000 quad-crown, three-colour posters dealing with cotton and 200,000 leaflets dealing with the same subject.

Almost every constituency made full use of the lighter evenings for open-air work and loud-speakers were a feature of the campaign, candidates generally taking the opportunity of speaking to the maximum number of people.

Lancashire's miniature election from July 6th to 12th provided a galaxy of national speakers for places which hitherto had rarely seen a national leader. Extraordinary crowds assembled in Barrow, Bolton, Crewe, Warrington, and Farnworth, and even in Darwen and Lonsdale Divisions, crowds assembled on a scale not hitherto known.

No report on the election would be complete without a reference to the generosity of our supporters where financial appeals were properly organised. Preston's £600 collection at one meeting was the record for the north-west.

HIGH-PRESSURE CAMPAIGNS

By **C. C. JONES** (Organiser, South-West)

A fortnight after the poll, and a week before the count, it can be said positively that in this election Labour has made its greatest forward stride since the voice of the Party was first heard in the South-West. In all the boroughs — Bristol, Plymouth, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Bath and Exeter—a campaign of high intensity was carried through. Among the wide-spreading county divisions, mostly covering from 300 to 500 square miles, there appeared nothing on this occasion

in the nature of a "propaganda fight"; every Party felt it was seriously challenging the possession of the seat. Calling for special mention for the vigour of their efforts are Thornbury and Stroud, in Gloucestershire; Swindon, in Wiltshire; Frome, Taunton and Yeovil, in Somerset; Dorset East; Barnstaple, South Molton, Torquay and Totnes, in Devon; and Penryn and Falmouth, in Cornwall. In the Forest of Dean it is not expected that a nondescript "National" candidate has

disturbed Labour's control of the constituency.

FINE CANDIDATES

Never was the Party better served by its candidates, nor its programme more effectively enunciated. To single out a few from so many would be invidious, but it must go on record that the work of the women candidates, three of them, was beyond praise.

A very short time before the campaign began, the problems of securing election agents appeared overwhelming, but they were overcome, somehow. Men were pulled—in some instances, dragged—out of factories, signal boxes and engine cabs, and turned their hands to the biggest task of their lives. In 41 contests, 31 men and women were tackling a job they had never faced before. Not one fell down. Some of them achieved prodigies, and that includes the two women agents.

TWO BIG TASKS

Two pressing tasks for all constituency parties emerge from the heat and fury of the contest. Firstly, in very

many places the meetings campaign was restricted by the sparsity of local speakers; hence the loud, long and vain outcry for "national speakers." More attention should be given to the encouragement and regular exercising of the men and women—and there are plenty of them—who have the capacity but lack the training to serve the Party well in this phase of activity.

Secondly, in every constituency, men and women of high quality hitherto unattached to any party have come forward, sometimes in large numbers, and done great service in the election field. This fine enthusiasm must not be allowed to dissipate. Most of these new-found friends are ripe for membership of the Party and calculated to serve it well if they are brought into our ranks immediately. The urgency of this matter is realised in some places, and already the flotation of many new Local Parties is in hand. Indeed, the clamour from all around is so insistent that your correspondent, who has had no holiday since 1939, hereby contemplates having none in 1945.

UNPRECEDENTED ENTHUSIASM

By HARRY WICKHAM (Secretary, West Midland Region)

Unprecedented enthusiasm, serious enquiry and a deep desire to understand the issues of the contest were the keynotes of the election campaign in the West Midlands. Reports from the 49 constituencies contested revealed an enormous interest in meetings with record overflow gatherings.

CANDIDATES BEST EVER

The choice of a really representative group of candidates stood us in good stead, and it is the general opinion that the standard of candidature in this election was the best the Party had ever put forward. Service candidates had an amazing reception in all areas, and in Ludlow, Shrewsbury, Warwick

and Leamington, Solihull and Stafford the candidates' tours became almost a triumphal procession. Special mention should be made of the great fight put in the Sutton Coldfield Division by ex-Prisoner of War Sgt. Fred Mulley.

NEW AGENTS

Like other areas we experienced great difficulty in securing agents for the election and 80 per cent. of the valiant comrades who undertook this onerous task were in the contest for the first time. They did a grand job of work and the election has revealed a reservoir of organising ability which is going to stand the Party in good stead for future work. We had six women Agents in



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the region, who all did finely. Legal difficulties were few and the team spirit engendered was first rate. The pre-election training of agents and key workers undoubtedly contributed to the general standard of success and the smooth running of the machine. This work must be a priority for the Party and especially among the younger members in the next twelve months.

PRINTING DIFFICULTIES

Printing difficulties were a nightmare to all agents but in spite of this the quality of publicity was exceptionally high. The Edgbaston Division, with its theme of "The Party with a Plan" and "Blue-print for the Future," were outstanding in poster and election literature design. In all parts of the region, artists and publicity experts gave wonderful service. Novel features were the grand Poster Parade at Stafford and the marvellous window display in special committee rooms at Worcester and Hanley. Wednesbury's 16-sheet cartoon Labour posters hit the target, and the Birmingham Election Special was a first-class production.

GRAND TOTALS

The outstanding experience of this election has been the wonderful collections from public meetings. Wolverhampton holds the record of £146 at one meeting, others include Coventry £120, Birmingham £125, West Bromwich £114, Wednesbury £110. There were innumerable collections ranging from £50 to £75, and even little village meetings brought in £10 to £30 collections. With a little more thought and

planning in the manner of making appeals we shall be able to secure really large sums to election funds in this way.

THOROUGH CANVASSING

Although daytime workers were in short supply, canvassing was more thorough than in any previous election. Most Divisions carried out a 50 per cent. to 60 per cent. canvass and in a large number reached 90 per cent. A few Divisions even carried through a second canvass and the number of young persons assisting in this important job was most encouraging. Even in Rural Divisions a 50 per cent. canvass was completed, and all felt that for the first time our people appreciated that this was the most vital job of the campaign. In fact, the tables were turned on this occasion and it was our opponents who failed to make personal visitation an effective part of the contest. Requests are now being received for Canvass Classes and Schools in readiness for the municipal fight.

BIRMINGHAM'S EFFORT

Birmingham really fought as a team and as a result of its Central Financial Appeal over £700 has been given in grants to Divisions, besides other services rendered. The confidence with which results are awaited is an omen of the success of this new approach to the softening of the hard core of Tory re-action in this great city and our experience leads us to go forward with bolder and bigger plans for a majority of the seats on the City Council in November.

RADIANT FAITH IN LABOUR

By TOM BAXTER (Secretary, East Midlands)

In the six counties of the East Midlands, Labour this time fought every division. With only two divided boroughs, one double-membered and four single borough constituencies the fight was largely in rural England. And what a grand fight it has been.

The enthusiasm and confidence on the countryside compared with the feeling in some of the safer Labour seats turned the election campaign into something resembling a religious

revival. Labour supporters on the countryside exhibited a radiant faith in the cause of the Labour Party. In more than one rural constituency, it was no accident that the posters of the Labour candidates read "Socialism is Practical Christianity." The open exhibition of Labour posters and window cards in the villages showed a larger measure of freedom from fear than at any previous election. Members of the Agricultural Workers' Union

were "key workers" in areas where we had no "contacts" in previous elections.

Meetings were well attended everywhere—except perhaps in the solid mining areas. Somehow or other we must get the miners to realise that election organisation depends upon willing workers. Indoor meetings were considered necessary in the earlier part of the campaign but it was soon found that the whole village, small town or street would prefer summer-time open-air meetings. Never before have we found loudspeaker equipment so valuable. Never before have we held so many election meetings or toured divisions so effectively in an election campaign. This time Labour's message was taken to the remotest parts of every rural constituency.

FINE LEADERS

Every Labour candidate made himself into a leader of men and women. And this goes for Mrs. Paton, the only woman candidate of any Party in the East Midlands. Only seven full-time agents were on the job and three of these only got into their saddles after the election was announced. Five-sixths of our divisions were therefore organised by honorary agents—most of them doing an agent's job for the first time. The election agents, like the candidates, did a fine job of work. Confusion was obvious in the first three or four weeks of the six-weeks' campaign and the vital lesson to be learned is that Agents must depute special jobs to others. Too many Agents tried to do everything themselves in the mistaken belief that their legal responsibilities implied that they must do everything. Some Party members even expect this

kind of service. In the future, Agents must start on the basis that they are managing directors with the vital power of appointing foremen. And the foremen must be given their head to organise their departments, subject, of course, to managerial advice, guidance and, if necessary, direction.

MONEY-RAISING

Most Parties tackled the money-raising job in fine style. One Party in the region was almost embarrassed with the response it secured to its appeal for money at meetings and in factories, etc. The few Parties which did not make a point of money-raising failed for this, and other reasons, to get the right spirit in their campaign.

The summer General Election of 1945 has been an inspiring experience in the East Midlands. The Tories had very little organisation from the beginning to the end of the campaign. We shall make the biggest mistake of our lives if we assume that this will continue. Our main fault in most divisions has been to concentrate too much on the organisation of meetings. Meetings should be only one aspect and not the whole of an election campaign. We must organise our forces on the doorsteps if we are to hold and improve upon the excellent results which will be announced on July 26th. The women members in some divisions did most of the work, but men and women must realise that they must join our army of canvassers. We must visit the electors in their homes. The Tory Party depended almost entirely upon a mass electioneering appeal on this occasion. The measure of its failure should be our warning.

YEOMEN OF SOCIALISM

By FRANK SHEPHERD (Secretary, Home Counties)

Labour's campaign in the Home and Southern Counties was remarkable for the recovery of our organisation in the badly blitzed constituencies of the outer London, Thames estuary, and coastal areas. Election Agents in these districts were faced with the non-existence of ward committees, an acute shortage of suitable premises for committee rooms, the loss of valuable records, and many other difficulties caused by enemy action. Many

Central Committee Rooms were established in war-damaged shops and dwelling-houses.

"HELL-FIRE CORNER"

Special praise is due to the Parties in the "Hell-Fire Corner" constituencies on the Kentish coast. From 1940 almost to VE Day these constituencies were subjected to many forms of enemy attack, including "tip-and-run" raids, "doodle-bugs," and long-range shelling.

In these divisions improvisation was the order of the day. Anti-invasion emplacements on beaches which a few weeks ago bristled with death were over-night converted into display sites for Labour publicity.

Labour candidates even turned the evil of shopping queues to advantage by addressing "loudspeaker" talks to housewives queuing for the weekly rations.

Eastbourne and Sevenoaks had outstandingly attractive central committee rooms, combining topical display with floral decoration. Richmond produced several striking ideas in double crown posters via a combination of silkscreen and letterpress.

YEOMEN IN ACTION

Not since the field-preaching of the Wesley brothers has such a surge of "revival" swept the hamlets and country towns of Southern England. Villages steeped in century-old Tory tradition bloomed with Labour posters. Rafters of rustic halls re-echoed for the first time the applause of yeomen turned Socialist — militant yeomen, ready to strike a blow for the Cause!

Undisturbed by the "Beaver," or by the antics of the Churchillian circus, thousands of rural electors made their first contribution to the forward march of Labour. For instance, in the Chertsey Division, only once before contested by Labour (1918), more than one

thousand workers reported for duty at Brian Barker's Committee Rooms on Polling Day; and let it be noted that in organisational terms the Divisional Party was little more than six months old.

THE NEXT ROUND

Space will not permit for tribute to be rendered to all who contributed to this glorious campaign, but let it be placed on record that candidates, agents, and rank-and-file worked miracles.

New divisions had been created almost on the eve of the election; a huge percentage of candidates and workers lacked experience of previous campaigns—never before had so many known so little about the mechanics of electioneering. Youth was with us and the Movement renewed its virility. In town and countryside the efficiency of Labour's organisation surprised our opponents. The Tory machine lacked its customary effectiveness in the constituencies.

Perhaps the Conservative Central Office will resort to a "purge." In any event we can count on facing a very different Tory organisation in the next round.

We must be prepared. When the election results have been declared we must examine our own constituency organisation in readiness for future events.

THRILLING TO SEE

By A. L. WILLIAMS (Organiser, Yorkshire, East and West Ridings)

Despite many warnings of its approach, several Divisional Labour Parties in Yorkshire were caught napping when the General Election actually came.

Frantic searches for printers, committee and meeting rooms and, in one or two instances, agents and candidates, did not make up for the dead months, when preparations could have been made at a leisurely pace.

The result was that in some places the Labour campaign started late, though in nearly every case election addresses and poll cards were in the hands of the post office the week-end before the poll.

Where there was a late start, workers were tied to the committee rooms

"writing up" until late in the campaign and a thorough canvass was an impossibility. The agent, in these cases, had to tackle jobs as they arose and could not work to a preconceived plan.

WORKERS RALLY

In many divisions, preparations had been made a long time before and it was thrilling to see the machine running smoothly with increasing speed after a few preliminary snorts and stutters. Generally, workers rallied to the Party in hundreds and they set about electioneering as if there had not been a gap of ten years since the last contest.

All Divisional Labour Parties believe they have done well, but only those

with proper canvassing arrangements and a proper committee room system operating on polling day can be sure of the results.

There are still some Yorkshire parties that don't believe in canvassing. On polling day they concentrate upon calling out everybody to vote. These parties must be just as surprised when they win seats as when they lose them, though we do not expect any to be lost on this occasion.

Despite printing difficulties our publicity has been better this time than previously. Agents and candidates are beginning to realise that closely printed matter is very unattractive and that few people read it.

BEST PUBLICITY

Undoubtedly, the best printed publicity was that produced in Central Bradford, where Maurice Webb's journalistic experience was exploited to the full.

Our poster displays in most places were excellent and in some beat the opposition parties. Leeds excelled with 16-sheet posters, though South-West Hull had the distinction of displaying a 32-sheet poster.

Unusual publicity methods included a shop window display of pictures of Ivor Thomas in various roles, and several window displays in Doncaster of staple domestic commodities to illustrate the effect of the removal of price controls after the last war. There was hardly a minute during the day when there was not a small crowd of people looking at the pictures in the

Keighley shop, and there is no doubt that Evelyn Walkden was able to get his message home with great effect.

On the whole, meetings were surprisingly well attended, especially in view of the very good weather, but it was evident that in some places insufficient attention had been given to the publicity and organisational details of the meetings and not sufficient doorstep work.

RURAL ENTHUSIASM

By contrast, in South Bradford, Meredith Titterton held only one or two indoor meetings, but used his loudspeaker equipment for addressing more than a score of short meetings at street corners. Alice Bacon spent nearly every afternoon and early evening doing this job, in addition to addressing many works' meetings and large public meetings.

One of the great surprises of the campaign was the enthusiasm with which our parties in rural constituencies, usually regarded as hopeless, threw themselves into the fight, and we shall not be surprised if we win at least two of them.

One outstanding lesson of the campaign has been that small membership parties cannot hope to tackle effectively all the tasks thrust upon them in an Election campaign. The support that Labour candidates have received at the polls can be turned into steady support for the Labour Party if only an effort is made to bring into our ranks the people who are only waiting to be asked to join.

SOLID SATISFACTION IN SCOTLAND

By JOHN TAYLOR (Scottish Secretary)

We are all feeling a sense of solid satisfaction at the Scottish Office of the Party. I write before the results are known, but we feel a rather good job was done and we are fairly confident that Labour will emerge as the strongest political party in Scotland.

Sixty-nine of the 71 Scottish constituencies were contested—more than ever before. The Tories and Liberal Nationals between them had 70. The Liberals (Sinclair blend) struggled hard to stage a come-back with 22. The Scottish Nationalists managed nine, the Communists five, the I.L.P. three and there were two "Inde-

pendents" for the Universities. In addition there was one Independent Conservative and one peculiarity who called himself a "Protestant Action" candidate, whatever that means. A grand total of 184 candidates for 71 constituencies returning 74 Members.

EARLY QUALMS

We had some qualms at the beginning. There seemed so many loose ends despite the considerable amount of ground work which had been accomplished. In all Scotland we had only one full-time and two part-time Agents. The rest were

mostly inexperienced amateurs and five weeks before polling day we were still about 20 short. We were also not a little scared of the rather haphazard slaphappy methods which pass for electioneering in Scotland, where, in the past, Agents have considered it their duty to go around with the candidate, run the election on the Returning Officer's deposit money, ignore canvassing and polling day organisation and concentrate on meetings and street chalking. For over five years we had been trying to break down this conception of electioneering and were by no means sure that we had succeeded.

TORIES ON RUN

I cannot claim that we had, altogether. Some things were done which would make Agents South of the Border throw a series of fits. But, on the whole, there was a decided improvement. It soon became evident that we had the Tories on the run, even in their citadels. The Labour campaigns went with a zip and swing except in a few of the alleged "safe" seats in the divided Burghs where the constituency Parties need blood transfusions. Canvassing was still at a discount and polling day organisation was still too feeble. (I think there are one or two divisions which we had won up to the eve of the poll and lost on polling day because of inadequate preparations.) But, withal, we had some remarkable experiences, especially in the County Divisions. There were magnificent rallies of

cheering electors in places which, in past elections, had produced small, tepid or timid audiences. We could not keep pace with a quarter of the demand for our literature, and we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves in the atmosphere of excited bustle, with Agents from all parts of our 500-mile campaign line exuding enthusiastic confidence over the overworked telephones.

INEFFICIENCY

The worst feature of the whole election in Scotland was the appalling inefficiency of the Polling arrangements. In this country these are in the hands of Law Officers of the Crown—Sheriffs, Sheriff-Clerks and their Deputies—and an unholy mess they made of their job in many cases. In the main they were satisfied with the polling stations which had served in past elections, quite unconcerned with the considerable movements of the population in the meantime. In practically every constituency there were too few stations. Large numbers of the Presiding Officers did not know their jobs and the most amazing episodes occurred as a result.

Polling Agents are a necessity in Scotland because of the inefficiency of many of the Presiding Officers.

On the whole, however, it was a great fight. Labour policy dominated the field. It has done the Labour Party in Scotland a large amount of good, for the Movement has seen that with good organisation there is not a seat in the whole country we could not win.

WOMEN WERE IN FOREFRONT *(concluded from page 15)*

By **ELIZABETH ANDREWS**
(Woman Organiser, Wales)

The enthusiasm, the eagerness to hear Labour's message and the willingness to give in collections proves to us that the membership is there—for the asking. We are already urging all the Sections, Federations and Central Committees through the Advisory Councils, to do this among the women, and are expecting a substantial increase in women membership, and new Sections formed in many areas. The women played a splendid part in the Election

on platform, chairmen, sub-agents, meetings officer, in charge of clerical work and committee rooms. We had one woman Agent, Councillor Mrs. D. Rees, for Llandaff and Barry.

Women's meetings in villages were greatly appreciated. The tour in Cardiganshire was very successful. The loud-speaker has now proved of immense value in elections, and should be part of our election equipment in every Division, and if fortunate to have a gramophone as well, can be a great attraction.

WOMEN WERE IN FOREFRONT

By **SARA E. BARKER**

(Woman Organiser, Yorkshire)

Throughout the war women members of the Party have in most centres maintained their organisation, despite all difficulties. The Party has benefited from this determination during the General Election campaign. In the constituencies I visited, women workers have been in the forefront of activity. Their enthusiasm, ability and thoroughness has undoubtedly been very marked, and from the awakened interest our women's organisations and the Party in general should derive new membership and activity.

It would be futile to say that our electoral machine had run at full concert pitch. We were still working under war-time conditions. Nevertheless, taking the campaign as a whole, it is remarkable how much detailed work has been accomplished. My chief criticism would be the lack of good canvassing. This is partly accounted for because we have not yet a full team, and secondly because during the war a generation of young people have come into the Party who have not had any electioneering experience.

Lack of sufficient trained agents has been a further weakness. If we achieve power the need for powerful constituency machinery will be greater than ever, and we cannot keep the high standard required, demanding constant drive and direction, unless agencies are increased.

By **FRANCES KIRBY**

(Woman Organiser, North-West)

There is an urgent need for some Party lead and guidance on the organisation of youth. Many, 14 to 21, are anxious to link up and the established organisation is not suitable.

I believe that if they were organised on a club basis, keeping the age limit low, success would be assured. The failure in the past has arisen when they have been granted voting power

within the constitution and developed into policy-making bodies. A Youth Movement as an educational adjunct of the Party providing facilities for joint schools, camps, forums, etc., would provide a great asset to the Party. It could be made quite clear that routine Party work was to be done within the existing machine, and the members would have there ample opportunity of expressing their views.

By **CONSTANCE KAY**

(Woman Organiser, East Midlands)

I visited most of the constituencies in this area during the campaign and in every case the Agent was most particular to impress upon me how much he valued and appreciated the work that our womenfolk had undertaken.

Already there are calls for the establishment of new Women's Sections. These will need nursing and we shall look to our well-trying Section members to help. People completely unknown to our movement have come along and given valuable service during the election. They must be drawn into the active life of the Party and the womenfolk encouraged to take part in Section activities.

By **MARGARET H. GIBB**

(Woman Organiser, Northern Area)

Over the divisions canvassing varied, but there is still much work to be done to make canvassers realise they have to locate support, not convert the electorate. In future work with Agents it would be well to give more and more consideration to the simplified single card system with street boxes.

There were not a large number of women's meetings, but where they were held I think the tendency for the candidate not to attend was bad. If special meetings for women are arranged, it should be on the basis that the candidate will be there part of the time.

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